

Tips For Successful Menu Planning

- ☺ Serve a variety of foods at each meal and snack. Do not serve the same snack every day or the same menu each week.
- ☺ Use water to quench children's thirst or as an extra during snack time when juice or milk is not served. Water is an important nutrient but does not count as part of a meal or snack in the meal pattern.
- ☺ Use these food items as extras: salad dressings, cream cheese, margarine, butter, jellies or fruit spreads, apple butter, salsa, popcorn, chips, juice drinks, and soft drinks. These foods are not included in the meal pattern requirement.
- ☺ Plan menus to meet the nutritional needs of the children. Include fresh fruits and vegetables, enriched grain products, seasonal and cultural foods, lean meat and meat alternatives, and milk.
- ☺ Inform families, cooks or food service providers on the State regulations for nutrition services. Participation in a school lunch or another food program does not exclude the facility from meeting State requirements. Include this information as part of the facility's nutrition philosophy.
- ☺ Provide direction and guidance to children and their families on the type of eating environment the facility has and explain how they will participate.
- ☺ Provide training to all staff on safe food handling and handwashing techniques.
- ☺ Develop a cycle menu which contains at least four weekly menus. Create a new cycle menu at least three times a year. Remember to date your menus and keep on file.